

**History & Social Sciences Framework Review Committee,
(Instructional Quality Commission) California Department of Education,
Sacramento, CA.**

Subject: Specific justification to reject comment #2545, #2544 from your 14-MAR-16 supplement. (these suggested changes by South Asian Faculty Group have selective bias). Please review the facts.

Dear Committee Members,

Firstly, I must convey my shock with the way some of the denigrating edits with regards to Hinduism are being considered in your supplement published on 14th March 2016 ([link](#)). I call upon you to **REJECT** these suggestions.

For time being, please consider the following:

Page 215, lines 896-897, Comment 2545

Current text: "They participated **equally with their husbands** in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations."

The change South Asian faculty group is asking: "They participated in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations, **though not as equals.**"

South Asian faculty's justification: *p. 215 line 896 Change* "They participated equally with their husbands in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations" to "They participated in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations, **though not as equals.**"

Also,

Page 215, lines 894-895, Comment 2544

Current text: "Although ancient India was a patriarchy, women had a right to their personal wealth, especially jewelry, gold, and silver, but **fewer** property rights than men."

The change South Asian faculty group is asking: "Although ancient India was a patriarchy, women had a right to their personal wealth, especially jewelry, gold, and silver, **but little property rights when compared to men**, akin to the other ancient kingdoms and societies."

South Asian faculty's justification: Pg. 214: line 883-4---"fewer property rights than men." We recommend changing fewer to little property rights when compared with men, akin to the other ancient kingdoms and societies.

I take strong objection to these suggestions. I ask you to reject them. Consider the following

1. These suggested edits alter narrative of original sentences.
2. There is no proof provided by South Asia Faculty Group to show that women were not participating equally.
3. Womens' and mens' roles have been treated complementing to each other in Hinduism, not competing.
4. In fact Hinduism is the only major religion where God is worshipped in female form as well as male form.
5. It is also the fact that Vedic yagyas or rituals performed by householders require the wife to be equally present throughout the process. There are multiple examples where the presence of the wife is mandatory for a ceremony.
6. Roles of women and men in *puja* (worship) ,rituals and festivals are always different yet equally intense, and it is inaccurate to make generic assumptions without supporting evidences. Especially in sixth grade framework, erring opposite to intent of the Content Standards is inaccurate.
7. In numerous Hindu social rituals like Satyanarayan *Puja*, *Vastu Shanti* (House warming ritual) there is equal role for husband and wife.
8. There are certain rituals that are executed by women while other by men. While *Sindur Khela* (from Bengal) and *Kumari Puja* have women as ritual performers, last rites of a dead person is an example of a ritual which is performed by men.
9. In fact, women play a greater role than the men do, in terms of festivals' participation. There are certain rituals such as *Oukshan* which are mainly performed by women.
10. Woman power or the concept of feminine divine is celebrated as the most powerful and empowering force in Hindu *Upanishads*, *Sastras* and *Puranas*, particularly in the *Devi Upanishad*, *Devi Mahatmya* and *Devi-Bhagavata Purana*.
11. In Vedic Era there are examples of many women scholars who have contributed to *Upanishads*. Ubhaya Bharati, wife of Mandan Misra facilitated the famous debate between Adi Shankaracharya and Mandan Misra on aspects of Hindu philosophy which shows that equal respect was given to women and gender discrimination was not an issue since men and women were treated based on their knowledge.

12. I have carefully reviewed the submission by South Asia Faculty Group, including their shallow justifications. I want to ask Department of Education, if the framework is meant to help children live in a harmonious society, or meant to be an avenue for hostile scholars to malign a culture? I as a mother of two young Hindu American daughters, take strong offense when my culture is maligned in such a way.

In summary, like in many cultures, the roles and duties of women and men were/are distributed, but that does not mean that **"they are not equal"**.

Final Changes Requested: Keep the original statement "They participated equally with their husbands in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations."

Sincerely Yours,
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